selected from amongst the standard pay scales determined by the successive Central Pay Commissions. The number of standard pay scales being limited, it becomes inescapable for staff performing different nature of duty to be placed in identical pay scales. While allotting pay scales to various categories, factors such as level of responsibilites, nature of work, recruitment qualifications and avenues of promotions etc. are kept in view.

Refund of Rail Demurrage and Wharfage charges

1989. CHAUDHARY CHUNNI LAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the policy laid down for refund of demurrage and wharfage charges in Commercial Manual;

(b) whether it is fact that no officer is taking responsibility for refund of the demurrage and wharfage charges as paid by the public and also for payment of claims by the Northern Railway officers;

(c) the number of claims cases repudiated in 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99; and

(d) the number of cases settled through Court and out of Court during 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) The relevant provisions in the Commercial Manual (Vol. II) with regard to Demurrage and Wharfage charges and refund overcharges are given in Statement. (*See* below)

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The number of claims cases for refund of demurrage and wharfage charges repudiated by Northern Railway is as under:—

Year	Number of Cases
1995-96	6,941
1996-97	16,644
1997-98	3,953
1998-99 (upto Jan., 1999)	2,631

(d) On Northern Railway, only one refund case has been settled through court in the year 1995-96 and no such case has been settled out of court during these years.

Statement

"Para 2035. Demurrage/wharfage charges forgone.

(a) If demurrage and/or wharfage charges accrued on a consignment are foregone under orders of the General Manager or any lower authority to whom the powers in this regard have been delegated, remission order in Form Com./R-17 Rev will be sent in duplicate, to the Station Master concerned. On receipt of the remission order, the Station Master should examine the same with a view to see that it is genuine in all respects, bears the seal of the issuing office and that full particulars as required by the form have been recorded therein.

(b) Full amount of the demurrage/wharfage charges accrued should be taken to debit in the station balance sheet, credit being taken for the amount foregone. One copy of the remission order should be sent to the Traffic Accounts Office along with the balance sheet in support of the credit entry and the other copy retained as station record.

(c) In case the remission order has not been received and the goods were delivered on telegraphic advice, or as per instructions of a competent authority communicated to the Station Master on telephone or otherwise, the amount foregone should be shown as 'outstanding' in the goods delivery book and the out-

standing list with a remark to the following effect:—

"Remission order awaited from——"

"1818. Overcharges—It is to be distinctly understood that no overcharge is to be taken credit for until at all requirements as to certification, etc., are fully carried out, or in the event of the amount having been collected and paid in, until the overcharge has been duly refunded. Any overcharge allowed or refunded on the authority of an order issued by a Commercial Officer, before receipt of a duly certified overcharge sheet, when such is necessary, should be treated as an 'outstanding' and included in the outstanding list until receipt of the certified overcharge sheet."

"1820. Recovery of railway dues before delivery of goods.— Before delivery of goods, it should be seen that all railway dues and other charges have been paid. Wharfage and demurrage charges should be levied under tariff rules and recovered, from the consignees/endorsee before the removal of goods from railway premises. Similarly, all undercharges noticed as a result of check of invoices, weighment of goods, etc., should be recovered from consignees/endorsee before delivery of goods. As regards overcharges claimed at the time of delivery, the procedure indicated in Chapter XXI should be followed."

Chapter XXI: Para "2151.—Refund of overcharges by Chief Commercial Superintendent.—Refund of overcharges in all cases other than those referred to in para 2158 can only be allowed by the Refunds branch in the Headquarters Office.

These refunds include—

(i) error in weight, description or routing of traffic;

(ii) error in rate, classification or computation of freight; claimed after delivery of goods/parcels;

(iii) amount twice paid; and

(iv) overcharges of 'paid' consignments.

In all such cases, the Refund branch will call for an overcharge sheet (Form Com/0-7 Rev.) from the station collecting the freight. It should be ensured by the station master that the overcharge sheet complete in all respects is submitted to the refunds branch without delay."

"2162. A remark about its submission to the Refunds branch should invariably be entered against the relevant entry in the cash book/goods outward book or delivery book, as the case may be, to prevent the possibility of a second overcharge sheet being passed in respect of the same consignment."

Racket in Rail Reservations

1990. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Railways that in all reservation counters there is a big racket;

(b) whether Government are aware of the press reports that certain railway officials and the RPF personnel are involved in the reservation racket; and

(c) if so, what steps are being taken to see that genuine travellers are not harassed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION. (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, some reports have appeared in the Press, in general, but there is no complaint of any big racket.

(c) To ensure availability of railway reservations to the genuine users, various steps are taken which include constitution of special teams consisting of Vigilance/Anti-fraud and Railway Protection Force